

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4127

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

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AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 331

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV NS

SUBJ: NEW FOREIGN AFFAIRS DIRECTORATE FORECAST

1. DURING MARCH 3 MEETING WITH CHARGE, ACTING GENERAL AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR HENAR SAID HE ANTICIPATES THAT THE MINISTRY WILL BE SPLIT INTO TWO DIRECTORATES, ONE IN CHARGE OF GENERAL AFFAIRS AND ONE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, NOW THAT D.I.R. VAN DER GELD IS RETIRING AS DIRECTOR. VAN DER GELD, WHO HAD BEEN DIRECTOR OF THE MINISTRY SINCE SURINAM'S INDEPENDENCE IN NOVEMBER 1975, HAS LEFT (AS OF FEBRUARY 25) ON AN ELEVEN MONTH HOLIDAY PRIOR TO FORMALLY RETIRING ON FEBRUARY 1, 1979. NEW ARRANGEMENTS AWAITS FORMAL ACTION BY PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET.

2. HENAR, WHO WAS NEXT IN LINE FOR VAN DER GELD'S JOB, SAID THAT BECAUSE OF HIS HEALTH PROBLEMS, HE HAD SUGGESTED TO PRIME MINISTER ARRON THAT IT MIGHT BE BETTER IF HE WERE PUT IN CHARGE OF GENERAL AFFAIRS (RESPONSIBLE FOR ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND RELATIONS BETWEEN THE MINISTRIES AND THE CONSTITUTIONAL BODIES INCLUDING

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PARLIAMENT) WITH SOMEONE ELSE BEING APPOINTED TO HANDLE FOREIGN RELATIONS AND TO CARRY THE ACCOMPANYING HEAVY REPRESENTATIONAL LOAD. ARRON APPARENTLY AGREED WITH THIS APPROACH, AND REPORTEDLY HAS SELECTED A DR. DERRYCK HEINEMANN AS THE NEW FOREIGN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR. HEINEMANN IS NOT KNOWN TO THE EMBASSY, HAS NO KNOWN EXPERIENCE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND IS A BIOLOGIST BY TRAINING. HE

IS RUMORED TO BE A CLOSE FRIEND OF THE PRIME MINISTER.

3. COMMENT: RESTRUCTURING OF GENERAL AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MINISTRY WILL TEMPORARILY WEAKEN SURINAM'S ALREADY LIMITED
CAPABILITY TO CONDUCT FOREIGN RELATIONS, SINCE THERE ARE
APPARENTLY NO IMMEDIATE PLANS TO GIVE THE NEW DIRECTOR
A DEPUTY AND SINCE HE HIMSELF APPARENTLY HAS NOT EXPERIENCE
IN THE FIELD. HENCE WE CAN ANTICIPATE AN INDEFINITE INTER-
REGNUM WHEN BUSINESS WILL MOVE EVEN MORE SLOWLY THAN IS
THE NORM. HENAR DID SAY THAT HE THINKS THE PRIME MINISTER
WILL EVENTUALLY ADD TO THE NEW DIRECTORATE'S STAFF AND
INDICATED THAT HE WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO ADVISE THE NEW
MAN WHEN NECESSARY. ON THE OTHER HAND, SPLIT IN THE
MINISTRY, IF MADE PERMANENT AND IF ADDITIONAL STAFF
ARE APPOINTED AND TRAINED, COULD EVENTUALLY STRENGTHEN
SURINAM'S ABILITY TO MONITOR INTERNATIONAL EVENTS AND
THINK OUT POLICIES IN A MORE SYSTEMATIC MANNER THAN
HAS HERETOFOR BEEN THE CASE.
LORTON

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